Rumour and decertification in Exile Politics

Globalizations

Rumour and Decertification in Exile Politics: Evidence from the Egyptian Case

--Manuscript Draft--

Full Title:	Rumour and Decertification in Exile Politics: Evidence from the Egyptian Case
Manuscript Number:	RGLO-2018-0004R2
Article Type:	Original Article
Keywords:	Social Movements; exile; rumour; decertification; contentious politics; Arab Spring
Abstract:	Does exile affect activism and if so how? In this paper the case of Egyptian activists exiled in England is taken as illustrative of processes typical of exiled activism. The case study draws on primary and secondary sources including a series of biographical interviews with exiled activists. The analysis compares activism in Egypt with exiled activism in England using the participants' critical self-reflections to explain the mechanisms mediating the changes. Contrary to reasonable expectations that exile is a spontaneous response to a change in political context, the conditions for exile predate banishment and lie within the institutions of dictatorship which decertify activism. Decertification continues throughout the exile process as fear of repression becomes internalised within the movement. Within the sanctuary of the host country a process of brokerage counteracts decertification expanding and modifying the exile repertoire.
Order of Authors:	David McKeever, Ph.D.
Response to Reviewers:	Thank you for your comments. I have removed the sentence requested.

Rumour and Decertification in Exile Politics: Evidence from the Egyptian Case

Dr David McKeever

Ulster University, Belfast, United Kingdom

mckeever-d3@ulster.ac.uk

David McKeever, a graduate of Ulster University, is a political scientist specialising in social movement research.

Rumour and Decertification in Exile Politics: Evidence from the Egyptian Case

Does exile affect activism and if so how? In this paper the case of Egyptian activists exiled in England is taken as illustrative of processes typical of exiled activism. The case study draws on primary and secondary sources including a series of biographical interviews with exiled activists. The analysis compares activism in Egypt with exiled activism in England using the participants' critical self-reflections to explain the mechanisms mediating the changes. Contrary to reasonable expectations that exile is a spontaneous response to a change in political context, the conditions for exile predate banishment and lie within the institutions of dictatorship which decertify activism. Decertification continues throughout the exile process as fear of repression becomes internalised within the movement. Within the sanctuary of the host country a process of brokerage counteracts decertification expanding and modifying the exile repertoire.

Keywords: social movements, exile, rumour, decertification, contentious politics, Arab Spring

Introduction

Exiled Activism: A New Focus for Social Movement Theory

Before, during, even after activists' flight from their home countries, dictatorial regimes undermine their participation in contentious politics. This paper addresses one of the surprising ways exile continues to deter activism, even from the relative safety of sanctuary abroad, yet how exiled activists do manage to assert relevance through integration. I designed the research in this paper to provide answers to questions about the effects exile has on mobilising structures. Are activists able to turn their exile to the advantage of their cause, by exploiting a new structure of opportunities abroad? While activists did bring networks and repertoires with them, they needed encouragement and assurances from each other and from new allies as their motivation was low and their security concerns high.

Shain (1989) has argued exile means different things to different people because it is a political term with no agreed definition in international law. Sociologists view exiles as socially deviant while psychologists and legal scholars both view exiles as variants of refugees. He continues, a point I concur with, that activism by exiles is important enough to warrant a particular definition for political science analyses (Shain, 2009: 387, 388). I extend Shain's definition, arguing that from the perspective of political science 'exile' is a social phenomenon, more specifically a political process, best understood through the prism of social movement theory.

Exile exists at the fringes of political science. It falls outside domestic politics but is not quite a matter of international relations (Roemer, 2008: 4). Nonetheless it has consequences for both, having been practiced throughout history (Shaw, 2000: 4). It was a feature of both ancient Greek (Forsdyke, 2005) and Roman politics (Shaw, 2000).

'Exile' is therefore a modern way to describe an ancient practice. In the twentieth century relevant research included psychological studies of the impact the isolation of exile has on the psyche and articulations of personal identity (Edinger, 1956; Kunz, 1973). Sznajder and Roniger accurately describe exile as "a mechanism of institutional exclusion – not the only one – by which a person involved in politics and public life, or perceived by power holders as such, is forced or pressed to leave his or her home country or place of residence, unable to return until a change in political circumstances takes place" (Sznajder and Roniger, 2009: 11).

They have made this argument in detail elsewhere in a study claiming the rise of exile organisations (NGOs and intergovernmental agencies) in the 1970s altered the context for transnational activism favourably for activists (Sznajder and Roniger, 2007). Shain and Ahran (2003) documented a similar process in the United States where organised exiles have had success in lobbying on foreign policy. Unlike these studies

that focused on *private* forms of political participation such as lobbying and financial flows the subject of this paper is the continuing *public* political participation of exiles.

The evidence in this paper is from the case of Egyptians living in England. This case is important in its own right but also has important lessons for social movement theory. Since 2013 the military in Egypt has retaken control of the state apparatus, massacring its main opponent, quelling a popular uprising and instigating a period of terror unknown in Egypt since the 1950s (Marfleet, 2016). For most of the period of this research Egypt was the country with the second highest number of journalists jailed, but has since been surpassed by Turkey (CPJ, 2017). The reintroduction of protest laws has made any public gathering, let alone political claim-making, offences carrying a prison sentence. Not for the first time in Egyptian history the terrifying practice of 'disappearances' has become a norm. Egyptians moving to England are in this context moving from one of the most repressive countries globally to one of the freest. If activists can mobilise anywhere surely it is in one of the worlds' oldest democracies. Nonetheless, the little large-*n* data there is on exile suggests that activists forced abroad after a military takeover sit more or less on the line of best fit in the distribution of cases (Binningsbø *et al*, 2012). The case is therefore so extreme, yet so typical on key indicators, it is reasonable to think lessons can be drawn for theory and for other activists elsewhere (Beach and Pedersen, 2016).

Using the example of the Egyptian case, I was able to disaggregate the process of exile into a number of mechanisms, in this paper I discuss two; decertification[1] and

[1] Decertification has been defined "as an external authority's signal that it is withdrawing recognition and support from a political actor" (Tarrow and Tilly, 2012: 215). Gentile's ethnographic and archival research, of relevance, has identified contractual blockages in

brokerage.[2] The fact of decertification continuing after exile implies a legacy effect of an historical path dependency as successive Egyptian governments have sought to delegitimise activism. I find evidence of this in the prevalence of rumours and fear, internalised within the movement. Brokerage counteracts this in the sense of cooperation between exiles and newfound allies enlarging the scope of political opportunities.

In putting this case study together, I assembled sources of evidence which I analysed relying on concepts from process tracing and the theoretical framework provided by contentious politics. I favoured a qualitative approach to evidencing these mechanisms for two reasons. First, I followed advice in the literature about difficulties in identifying indicators of mechanisms and the strength of case studies in developing observations of mechanisms (Falletti and Lynch, 2008; Staggenborg, 2002). Second, life-history inspired approaches are well-suited to studies of exile. This has to do with a variety of factors ranging from the personal intimacy of the exile experience to the protracted character of the process of exile (Cornejo, 2008; Shahidian, 2000).

---

certification which have prevented European trade unions from coalition building (Gentile, 2016).

[2] In contentious politics brokerage is commonly understood as the "production of a new connection between previously unconnected or weakly connected sites" (Tarrow and Tilly, 2012: 215). In historical cases SMOs were the only suitably resourced actors to function as brokers, but in the age of social media this role can be taken over by looser knit associations or even individuals (Bennet and Segerberg, 2012). Hence, in pre-exile Egyptian activism researchers have argued the mechanism brokerage as part of a transnational diffusion process, was crucial in increasing the frequency and volume of contention in Egypt in the years preceding the Tahrir revolution (Abdelrahman, 2011).

The research lasted three years involving four field trips, three in London, one in Manchester as well as video conference style interviews with Egyptians living in London, Cambridge, Birmingham, Exeter, Manchester and Liverpool. In all I interviewed twenty-two Egyptians resident in England, plus six allies and observers of the London Egyptian activism scene. I used the interviews to understand the participants' critical self-interpretations of why they did or did not participate in activism. In seeking to understand how exile affected activism it was necessary to examine the history of exiled activism, and the level of detail that required exceeded the memory of even the most observant eye-witness. The descriptive parts of the case study are therefore also based on documentary sources of various types. Using the Nexus database I corroborated as many of these events as possible based on reports in national UK newspapers, regional English newspapers and local London newspapers. A further source was the activist organisations (SMOs) themselves. SMOs produce literature that is of interest and in the age of social media inadvertently create a record of their activities through public event invitations.

The paper begins with a fresh account of the history of Egyptian activism in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, reinterpreted in light of modern theories of contentious politics. This account is brief, sufficient to contrast with the rest of the paper which contains an account of exiled activism in England, mostly in London. I consider the 'exile movement' in terms of its organisation and its actions. I argue that both in terms of recruitment and participation decertification continues to act as a deterrent as activists fear the reach of the military regime through the London embassy. The paper concludes with a comparison of the conditions and mechanisms of activism before and after exile in which I try to suggest the ways that the experience of Egyptians in England may contribute significant observations to theories of contentious politics.

Historical Roots of Decertification

The root causes of contemporary Egyptian exile are to be found not in the recent coup d'etat, but in another one, more than half a century earlier. Nasser's coup in 1952 closed off political opportunities for activists and initiated the process of decertification that pushed activists seeking to create their own opportunities to the margins, to the ultimate extent of exile in the modern era.[3] Following the Free Officer's (FO) coup the first social group to voice their political claims were textile workers in the industrial town Kafr Al-Dawr. Their protest was an industrial dispute with their private sector employers over pay and conditions that was not necessarily a matter of contentious politics.[4] However, the workers shrewdly took advantage of political instability caused by the FO coup to frame their claims as politically motivated. Although their

---

[3] Context for this argument comes in an extended quote from Marfleet (2016). Marfleet presents evidence masterfully demonstrating the ideology underpinning decertification was brought to Egypt by British colonisers. He goes on to argue this was opportunistically appropriated later by secular Egyptian autocrats (Marfleet, 2016: 21-23).

> "In Egypt, occupied by British forces in 1882, the colonial administration combined suspicion of the mass of people with a conviction that they lacked capacities to modify both their material circumstances and their subordinate political status. According to the British administrator Alfred (later Viscount) Milner, the people of Egypt were 'docile and good tempered'; they were 'a nation of submissive slaves, not only bereft of any vestige of liberal institutions but devoid of any spark of the spirit of liberty; (Milner, 2002 [1892]: 178). At the same time they were 'in the grip of a religion the most intolerant and fanatical' (Milner, 2002 [1892]:2). Egyptians required European rule and reform: British military occupation, Milner suggested, had succeeded in bringing a 'revolution' to their lives in the form of new institutions of administration and justice (Milner, 2002 [1982]: 5)." (Marleet, 2016: 18).

[4] Strictly speaking contentious politics are interactions involving state actors.

declarations of loyalty to the new regime may have helped convince management (well known supporters of the monarchy that was replaced by the FO) to make concessions the response of the state made the new regime's approach to activism clear. Five-hundred and forty-nine strikers were arrested with three leaders sentenced to death (one received a reduced life sentence). This event established the precedent for activism in the first two terms of indigenous Egyptian dictatorship (Abdalla, 1985; Erlich, 1989; Vatikiotis, 1978; Vatikiotis, 1980).

The years from 1968 until 1976 were years of student radicalism.[5] In particular the episodes of 1968 and 1972 have become known in the popular history of student activism as years of 'uprising'. This phase of activism was also initiated by perceptions of political instability when workers marched in protest against defeat in the six-day war between Israel and the Arab nations. In 1968 following workers' protests at Helwan students at Cairo University formed a twelve-man committee to coordinate and organise protests in solidarity with marching workers. This committee organised contentious performances including marches, sit-ins and static demonstrations. Members of the committee were allowed into the parliament to put their demands to Sadat who at the time was speaker of the house; they were later arrested. The committee also managed to coordinate, by telephone, simultaneous student marches in Cairo and Alexandria.

[5] The historical record of activism contains a gap between 1954 and 1968. "In the following days students passed beyond the university gates and made their presence felt on the streets of Cairo and Alexandria for the first time since 1954." (Abdalla, 1985: 149,150). "The student riots and workers' demonstrations of February 1968, however, came as an unexpected blow to Nasser's recovery from the 1967 debacle. In magnitude and ferocity they were the first since 1954, indeed since 1952." (Vatikiotis, 1978: 185).

The dearth of activism during the first two terms of indigenous dictatorship is in part explained by repression, but also due to the replacement of political parties with unique, pro-regime mass-parties designed to redirect political claim-making[6] (Abdalla, 1985: 127; Binder, 1969: 401; Wickham, 2002: 29). That this was successful in commencing the process of decertification in this period is evident in the re-emergence of more explicitly political protest in Mubarak's era, with the reestablishment of a (flawed) multi-party system.[7] When, in 2003, America invaded Iraq, protesters gathered in Cairo's Tahrir Square (Sachs, 2003). The protests were not overtly subversive as their demands were anti-American, not anti-Mubarak. Yet they met with repression and dispersal, a job the police were ruthless in carrying out. Through criticism of American foreign policy Egyptian protesters were criticising their own allied government by association.

Following the anti-war demonstrations Tahrir Square became a regular venue for protest (Interview 1, 4). The Egyptian public became accustomed to two relatively novel aspects of political expression and one well known aspect: public claim-making, organised protest and repression. The first to organise were 'Kefaya!': a group of pro-democracy activists whose name in Arabic means 'Enough!'. Kefaya were primarily protesting censorship under the regime and merely asserted their claimed right to protest (Interview 6). Their more ambitious long-term aim, however, was to prevent a Mubarak

---

[6] "[T]hey [the FO] were not opposed to parties as such, only to their corrupt leaders. Thus the Liberation Rally was designed not as a party, but as an instrument for the reorganisation of popular forces." Nasser quoted in (Vatikiotis, 1978: 134).

[7] The exception to this trend towards politicisation being protests surrounding the Danish publication of cartoons depicting images offensive to some Muslims (Sami, Al-Ahram, 2006).

family succession and ensure the presidency did not fall to Hosni's son Gamal (Marfleet, 2016, 49). Their first protest was small. Protesters gathered in Tahrir square for a silent protest wearing yellow stickers on their mouth to symbolise the regime's censorship (El-Mahdi, 2009: 89; Khalil, 2012: 62). The protest was repressed (Naguib, 2011: 9; Oweidat et al, 2008: 11).

Yet Kefaya continued agitation and from time to time staged protests (GNAD, 2005). Their method was innovative for the period as they organised entirely online. The absence of a physical headquarters in their earliest days seems to have guarded against surveillance by a regime caught by surprise. Even after the activists disbanded the group left a legacy on Egyptian activism in various blogs which served as an alternative press in the days before a regime to could dismiss citizen journalism as 'fake news' (Lim, 2012; 235-238).

A new group of activists led by Ahmed Maher tried to broaden the base of protest by calling a general strike on the 6th of April 2008. The strike led to two days of violent clashes between riot police and workers at Egypt's largest textile factory at the Nile delta (Khalil, 2012: 72,73). The group took the date April 6th as their name. The strike was intended to extend opposition to include both the youth and the industrial working class (Interview 1; Marfleet, 2016: 50). The movement was successful in this regard. In discussions exiles in England have stressed the ongoing motivational effects of the solidarity achieved between social classes during the April 6 campaign (Interviews 1, 5, 6, 7). Observers such as Naguib and Marfleet (2016, 50) have argued the networks developed between activists and trade unions during this campaign mattered more to mobilisation in the 2011 revolution than the networks developed by Kefaya.

Summary: The Transformation of Activism in Egypt

As political opportunities in Egypt were monopolised by the regime, activism underwent a process of decertification. The historical record shows that not only was activism discouraged it was also physically contained. Whereas when Nasser took power in the 1950s contention had been geographically dispersed, with the industrial periphery at least as active as the centres of political and executive power in Cairo and Alexandria. This containment of activism is further evident in the Egyptian activism repertoire. At the beginning of the period surveyed protesters marched as they made their claims. Then, by the modern period when basically all activism had migrated to Cairo, the 'occupation' style protest came to dominate, almost as if the protests had come to a standstill. Today, even outside of Egypt, 'Tahrir' is often taken as a symbol of liberation and rebellion. Viewed through this historical lens it seems just as reasonable to think of it not as a liberated space but as one where activists are cornered.

Decertification: The Effects of Rumours within the Movement

Decertification continues to operate even after the act of exile, prohibiting new mobilisations from abroad. In particular, decertification at this micro-sociological level manifests itself in the spread of rumours within activist circles, or mobilising structures.[8] As rumours are endogenous (to the mobilising structures) this suggests that

[8] The observation this section discusses was made in the field and did change my research plan significantly. In private discussions with exiles I noticed the pattern of otherwise reasonable, some highly educated, people voicing quite spectacular worries, bordering on conspiracy. When I noted the possibility I was observing decertification in action I refined my interview questions to test for this without leading the interviewee. Rather than ask about rumours and fears directly I would ask about challenges in mobilising activists or reasons for non-

decertification behaves, after a point, in a way that is self-reinforcing. Pre-exile institutional path dependence delegitimised activism or focussed political claim-making within arenas that did not challenge the regime's hegemony. Post-exile decertification has become a part of the movement itself as fear and rumour (founded or unfounded) inhibit the diffusion of activism.

Egyptians arriving in England are accustomed to fear and mistrust of authority. Although they are objectively safer in England their previous life experiences have taught them to avoid political contestations. Previous researchers have argued that Egyptians abroad are as mistrustful of authority as Egyptians at home citing examples such as occasions of Egyptians forgoing their right to vote at the local embassy due to fear of surveillance (Morsi, 2000; Baraulina et al, 2007). Yet that is not to suggest that within exile mobilising structures any general sense of conspiracy or atmosphere of intrigue exists. My anecdotal experience in the field is that Egyptian exiles are more or less reasonable people and this sense is echoed by other researchers working with the same group (Underhill, 2016). Nonetheless unfounded rumours are actively prohibiting mobilisations.

Rumour

Rumour is known to social movement scholars as a variable that can compel panics or equally initiate a mobilisation (Fine and Turner, 2001; Polletta, 2006). By rumour, I mean, quite narrowly, information that is spread without "secure standards of evidence"

---

participation. I would follow up within the same interview or in further correspondence if a participant did describe rumours to me by asking them more directly about rumour and fear, in this way I felt confident that I had checked my interpretations with the participants, without putting words in their mouth.

(Fine, 2013: 1594). For empirical reasons there is no need to think of rumours as being more or less widespread. What matters here is the impact rumours can have on mobilisation. A rumour can have no truth yet still have enough purchase to dissuade potential activists from joining a march.[9]

Rumours damage the reputations of SMOs. In Egypt the revolutionary socialists were rumoured to have been infiltrated by Egyptian secret police (Interview 4, 6, 11). The leadership of the RSE in England deny this (Ali, 2011). Evidence supports the RSE's claims to independence; several of their members are currently political prisoners (Interview 7,14). (Yet the nature of conspiracy theories is that they cannot be falsified with counter-evidence). Would-be RSE supporters and volunteers in English exile looked for British organisations, the British Communist Party and Socialist Workers Party, to work with instead of the RSE in order to avoid surveillance by Egyptian security forces (Interview 6, 11). Counterfactually it is possible that this rumour of infiltration accounts for the absence of Egyptian SMOs from the English scene, significant given that former senior activists from both Kefaya and April 6 now live in London (Interview 6). Both Kefaya and April 6 have been victims of the same rumours (Interview 3, 7). Later I will discuss brokerage as a counterweight to decertification, using the example of the Justice for Giulio campaign. In fact RSE activists collaborating with UK SMOs such as the Socialist Workers Party provide an example of brokered solutions to the challenges of rumours. RSE activists addressing SWP conferences

[9] Collective action situations are the ideal conditions for rumours to spread. Shibutani (1966) argued as much in his analysis of rumours in Japanese-American internment camps. Polletta (2006) found similar results in her study of movement diffusion. In these studies researchers observed activists developing rumours either to fill in gaps in official discourse, or to counter information from official sources that was contrary to their movement's discourse.

redirects the energy of activists deterred by rumours of infiltration at the same time as expanding activist networks and repertoires.

As mentioned above, it does not seem unreasonable to suggest Egyptians may broadly distrust authority. This is a normal outcome of decades of dictatorship. Given the brutality of the Egyptian regime there are legitimate security concerns surrounding Egyptian activism, even from exile.[10] A surprising number of Egyptians in London view of the Egyptian embassy as an institution whose function is surveillance of the Egyptian diaspora. Would-be activists worry that if they are identified by diplomatic staff they will be arrested when they return to Egypt to visit their family. Indeed some activists do claim that they are subjected to harassment by airport security every time they fly to or from Cairo (Interview 10). Related to this Egyptians worry that if they are identified as part of an opposition abroad their families in Egypt will be harassed or even arrested by security forces (Interview 10). In this sense, the Egyptian embassy is a bold choice of location for protests by the MB.

Rumours about the role of the Egyptian embassy and about repercussions for family have a direct impact on participation in contentious actions. Both Egyptian and UK based SMOs are aware of these concerns and have strategies for tackling them.

---

[10] This is among the reasons I have protected the identities of my informants. Although the Egyptians I worked with in England were probably the bravest people I will ever meet, their real security concerns affected my work from the offset. Basically every activist I met assumed I was working undercover for the Egyptian embassy. This meant I could not interview activists online, which would have reduced the costs of the study. I had to go to London to meet these people and earn their trust. Even then, the Egyptian exiles I met are so mistrustful I was unable to ever employ a snowball sampling technique as had been my intention.

More than any SMO, supporters of the MB have managed to mobilise protesters on the street. Partly this is attributable to their persistence organising events on a monthly, sometimes fortnightly, basis. Partly it is attributable to the style of event they host, with entertainment on a family friendly model, which makes the events feel less contentious. ESI experimented briefly with coordinating protest campaigns in England and Egypt simultaneously but decided to restrict their activities to the UK, partly to allay fears of repercussions for family members (Interview 13). Activists within the movement, both Egyptian and non-Egyptian, have noticed these issues and acted as brokers to overcome the challenges of decertification.

Unlike in the broader historical sense decertification at this stage in the exile process does not rely on any actual input from external authorities. Activists have internalised perceptions of the regime's danger and power (which in part motivated their original flight) and these are sufficient to ensure decertification continues to function and is in this sense self-reinforcing.

Brokerage: A Counterbalance to Decertification

Sympathetic British activists are as much a part of this story as Egyptians in exile. When motivation is low among Egyptians or security concerns are high there are influential allies there to persuade Egyptians into action or to mobilise on their behalf. Where decertification worked to convince Egyptians activism would either be futile or counter-productive, brokerage was set in motion by 'political entrepreneurs' who brought Egyptians into contact with their allies (Lewis and Mosse, 2006: 13). In order to observe the function of brokerage it is necessary to examine the exile SMOs and their actions in detail. Following the account of exiled activism I will offer the case of Justice for Giulio as a particularly compelling example of the mechanism.

The Muslim Brotherhood in England

Both in organisational terms and in mobilisation capacity the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) have the most extensive apparatus in England. This is partly because their presence in England, and across Europe, has been established since their earlier proscribed periods in the 20th century. Before 2013 MB in England benefited from funding by the Gulf states but none the less lacked the self-confidence to organise under their own name preferring to mobilise through proxy organisations (Rich, 2010: 131; Whine, 2005: 35). After the 2013 coup the Brotherhood reportedly shifted their headquarters to north London to avoid persecution (The Times, May 15, 2015). Yet the move appears to have been abandoned or motivated by PR purposes (Channel 4 News, 2015).

Despite having taken up semi-official residence in London it is more meaningful to talk of the MB in England as an SMO rather than a party. That is to say that given the size of the MB in Egypt and abroad, in London as with other European capitals, the MB have substantial numbers of supporters and followers rather than members over whom the leadership could exert direct control (Interviews 2, 8, 10). So in London, the label SMO appropriately describes the range of more and less formal organisations that support the MB.

The Muslim Association of Britain (MAB), for example, is a respectable Muslim, civil society organisation in the UK that happens to be 'dominated' by supporters of the MB, to use the language of a UK government report (Jenkins and Farr, 2015: 23).[11] The MAB have worked with the UK government in combatting terrorism

[11] The UK government in 2015 published redacted findings from a report into the 'activities' of the MB in the UK at the request of the Saudi government (*The Times*, November 5, 2015).

within the UK, for instance by assisting police in their operation to remove Abu Hamza from his central London mosque. Yet they share the goals and values of the MB, have been active in London mayoral elections (supporting Ken Livingstone and Sadiq Khan) and sending speakers and grassroots members to MB protests (Interview 16). MB supporters in London have an online presence primarily through Facebook pages, in particular R4BIA, British Egyptians for Democracy and Stop Sisi (Jenkins and Farr, 2015: 26). The former is an ongoing campaign that protests regularly on the streets of London and provides an online forum for raising awareness of Brotherhood claims. Stop Sisi is a campaign that was established to mobilise protest on the streets of London to coincide with Sisi's state visit to the UK.

Characterising the Brotherhood's ideology is complicated by internal debates (Naguib, 2009: 105). These in turn shed more light on the specific character of the organisation in London. The London leadership in late 2015 were embroiled in a power struggle with the new Egyptian leadership which had elected a radical spokesperson who had publicly condoned the use of violence in politics. London attempted to impose a moderate candidate for leader suggesting the commitment to democracy in England is strong (Mada Masr, 2015). As is well known the Muslim Brotherhood's ideology is Islamist and their commitment to democracy has for most of their history been far from assured. Nonetheless their claims to democratic legitimacy have dominated their discourse in the west since the Raab'a massacre of 2013 in which the military dictatorship brutally killed thousands of their members and supporters. The Brotherhood pioneered the 'secret cell' structure that has characterised Islamist groups subsequently and therefore it is futile to attempt to put a figure to their English membership. Nonetheless it is clear to any observer who has spent time attending protests or events in London that of all the groups active in England it is the Brotherhood who command the

force of numbers (Underhill, 2016, 28-29). This is partly because unaffiliated Islamists are willing to lend their support to Brotherhood events (Interviews 6, 10).

On the streets of London supporters of the MB have claimed a space for their protests outside of the Egyptian Embassy which they often march to from Marble Arch. Their protests reveal aspects of their discourse that attempts to state their democratic claims to power in Egypt while simultaneously affirming their identity as British Egyptians. For example, bearded Islamists have posed for photos on protest at the embassy atop 'Boris Bikes', civic bicycles introduced to London by former mayor Boris Johnson. Another claim making technique used by MB supporters is the use of protesting wearing the face of deposed MB president Morsi as a mask.

Revolutionary Socialists of Egypt (RSE)

The RSE are a Trotskyist political faction who have operated in Egypt since circa 2003. Similar to the MB some of their prominent and grassroots members have been political prisoners since the 2013 coup. Their numbers have always been smaller than those of the MB, the 2003 protests in solidarity with Palestine remained, until the 2011 revolution, their primary period of recruitment (Ali, 2011). Despite organising in a manner reminiscent of formal political parties the RSE have refused to grant successive Egyptian dictatorships approval by participating in fraudulent elections and have opted instead to voice their political claims through extra-parliamentary yet nonviolent activism (El-Hamalawy, 2011).

Since the coup those members of the RSE leadership who have evaded arrest have relocated to England where they have taken up roles as guest scholars at UK universities. From English exile they have continued their work of peaceful activism, yet unlike the Muslim Brothers the RSE have focussed on working with English activists and spreading their message through dialogue rather than protest (Interview 7).

Revolutionary Socialists have not maintained a presence outside the Egyptian embassy and were absent from anti-Sisi protests at Downing street (Interview 10, 15). The RSE have nurtured connections with British socialist organisations such as the Socialist Workers Party whose conference they have addressed three years running (Interview 7).

Egypt Solidarity Initiative (ESI)

When Egyptians in exile have shown reticence voicing their political claims, sympathetic allies have mobilised on their behalf, doing what they could to encourage exiled activism. Since 2014 The Egypt Solidarity Initiative (ESI) has developed a brand that is known within activist circles. A nimble and effective outfit, born of the UK trade union movement, ESI mobilises union resources around campaigns in solidarity with the repressed workers movement in Egypt. Nimble because, rather than develop a new organisation, when its organisers perceived a need for an Egypt specific campaign they launched the organisation as a campaign belonging to, and with access to resources belonging to, a previously established wing of trade unionism, the MENA solidarity network (Interview 14). Similar to other SMOs discussed in this paper ESI are able to operate with, in this case, union resources with comparatively low costs as they avoid the administration involved with a formal membership structure. Grassroots ESI activists are volunteers borrowed from trade union and student movements whose actions are directed (in a collective sense) by a permanent steering group (Interviews 14, 15).

Their effectiveness, a function of tactics, is evident in movement outcomes. ESI campaigns have reached a level of brand recognition such that on most campaign literature the ESI logo appears alongside the MENA solidarity logo in order to lend some prestige to the latter, although the two are in reality not distinct units (Interview 13). The steering group officially includes names well known in UK politics from the

trade union movement such as the late Bob Crowe, John McDonnell and Jeremy Corbyn who were present at the founding meeting and lend their own prestige to the movement. Day to day however the group is staffed by a core of dedicated activists who have day jobs, are less well known to the UK public, and for varying reasons happen to have a particular interest in the Egyptian workers movement (Interviews 14, 15).

ESI are open about their trade union funding sources which are listed on their website in order to avoid accusations of political subterfuge by Egyptian authorities. For the same reason (in addition to security fears) ESI restrict their activism to within the UK. Since 2014 they have staged a number of creative public protests in London designed to draw public attention to human rights violations and workers' struggles in Egypt. An analogous tactic has been to piggy-back on larger protests, such as students marches and protests after Brexit in order to spread their message at street level.

Their most ambitious, and probably most effective, actions have been two conferences on the topic of Arab counter-revolutions and the publication a quarterly journal, in the format of a glossy magazine.

Non-partisan Activism

Other activists in England prefer to lend their support to events rather than to any group or ideology. These people are the grassroots of the movement, which is something distinct from a political party in any case. Movements, more than parties, are fluid and share supporters between and across chapters. These activists are the real colour and emotion of the exile scene. There is, for example, an Egyptian singer living in London who in 2011 had performed on stage in Tahrir Square songs she had composed for the revolution. She left Egypt following the coup and now sings love songs in night clubs around England but also performs the songs of revolution at exile protests (Interview 9). Her songs are popular within the exile community, but probably more popular with

activist organisers who implicitly or explicitly understand that music can offer more selective incentives (the solution to Olsen's collective action problem) than a noble cause can.

Several alliances have been established between exiles and British activists. Several Labour MPs have devoted parliamentary and extra-parliamentary resources to working with the movement. John McDonnell is a long-term member of the ESI steering committee and along with Jeremy Corbyn have both appeared on ESI marches (Interview 14; Middle East Solidarity Autumn 2015: 22). Daniel Zeichner, discussed in more detail below, the Labour MP for Cambridge has worked with Amnesty and ESI on the campaign against police brutality in Egypt (Interview 13). Even the artist Banksy has worked with Egyptian exiles who worked on the Arab Spring themed artwork in his 'Dismaland' exhibition (Interview 7; Mada Masr, September 27, 2015).

Justice for Giulio

We have already considered brief examples of brokerage at work in how SMOs dealt with the challenges of decertification. Take the campaign surrounding Giulio Regeini as illustrative of the process in more detail.[12] Brokerage is at work whenever activists cooperate, and is of greater analytical significance whenever SMOs cooperate, the case of Regeini is an excellent example of SMOs cooperating with non-movement actors

[12] An equally telling example is that of the protests surrounding president Sisi's visit to Downing Street. These protests brought the full ideological spectrum of exiled activists onto the streets in common cause (as well as a bus of Sisi supporters) (*The Times*, November 5, 2015; Middle East Solidarity, Spring 2016: 22). However, in the run up to the visit MB activists actually reached out to secular and socialist organisations to coordinate activities (Interviews 5, 10, 15; *The Independent*, June 18, 2015).

over a sustained campaign. Regeini was an Italian PhD student at Cambridge University researching independent trade union activity in post-revolution Egypt. He died in Egypt while on field work, his death bearing all the hallmarks of murder by the secret police. His body, found by the side of the road, bore the scars of torture. The case caused some outrage in the UK and Italy. For Egyptians torture and disappearance are common occurrences which invariably go unreported in the West. Regeini's death brought the story home to UK news audience. A campaign called Justice for Giulio was set up by political entrepreneurs who brought Egyptian and English activists together.

The campaign began when the MP for Cambridge, Daniel Zeichner, took ownership of the matter and contacted Amnesty International (Interviews 5, 13, 14). He proposed a partnership to raise the profile of the issue. Zeichner, on his own initiative, first handled the case as a constituency matter acting independently. He raised the issue in parliament working with opposition MPs to raise an early day motion calling on the government to investigate the causes of death. He met with staff at Cambridge University to review security and ethical procedures. He also met with Regeini's parents at the European parliament. However, Zeichner, worked with Amnesty to bring the power of activism to bear on the issue. Zeichner organised town hall meetings in Cambridge where the issue was important to students and residents. Meetings were addressed by Zeichner as well as representatives of Amnesty, ESI (on the invitation of Amnesty) and the National Union of Journalists (NUJ) (Interview 12). The campaign spread as Amnesty produced campaign materials (placards, t-shirts, leaflets) which ESI took to the streets, campuses and conferences. ESI also used their magazine to report on and raise the profile of the issue.

The case may have had more resonance for the wider British audience than it did for Egyptian exiles, who, while they sympathised with Regeini, also understood that

torture, disappearance and state killings are an ordinary part of life in Egypt. Brokerage kicked in when Zeichner performed the functions of a political entrepreneur, connecting previously unconnected groups, including but not restricted to Amnesty, ESI, and the NUJ, initiating a fresh wave of activism in so doing. This example is compelling because it illustrates how, by connecting diverse SMOs and allies around a single issue the mechanism fundamentally altered the character of the exile mobilizing structure both in terms of its network and its repertoire.

Comparing Activism in Egypt and England

The move from Egypt to England coincided with changes both in opportunities for activism and the forms it took. The convergence of institutional exclusion and repression in Egypt make the Egyptian polity appear 'closed' to activism, at least relative the stable English polity with its established division of powers, multi-layered representation and availability of political allies for activists. The repertoire of exile is more diverse than the Egyptian repertoire. Activists in England have found a home on campus and have directed much of their energy toward intellectual activities (research, conferences) that straddle the boundary between research and activism. The Egyptian end of the spectrum is fundamentally more radical as it contains riots, the English repertoire being more peaceful.

The attention to the mechanics of exile in the case study however suggests that variation in opportunities and repertoire is more than simply the initial conditions giving way to subsequent conditions. Decertification and brokerage connect activism before and after exile as well as connecting exiled activism to other instances of contentious politics. Both mechanisms appear as historical constants yet exhibit variation at a micro-sociological level entailing different outcomes. Prior to exile decertification was engineered by an authoritarian regime at an institutional level in an attempt to limit and

control political claim-making. After exile the input of an external authority became superfluous as the effects of political censorship became self-reinforcing through rumours and fears. Brokerage meanwhile, though present in inter-SMO cooperation in Egypt, took on an added dimension in England where allies of the movement as diverse as interested observers, trades unions and Members of Parliament acted to integrate exiles into the everyday political claim-making of the host country.

Conclusion: The Mechanics of Exile

When exiles left Egypt for England they left behind a culture of suspicion that expressly prohibited political engagement. Most if not all had been present in the Tahrir revolution, arguably the first iconic moment of democratic history in the 21st century, but arrived in England fatigued, unengaged and often scared. In the permissive political culture of cosmopolitan London their movement flourished, contrary to the implicit aims of the authoritarian regime whose unofficial policy of exile had initiated the process. Yet it did not have to turn out like this. Had exile operated as the military regime of Egypt had intended the movement would have burned out into apathy. As it transpired exile did change activism, but it did not put a stop to it.

Analytically I have suggested that decertification and brokerage explain much of the mobilisation observed. Decertification has historical precedents that can be traced back to the establishment of the mass parties in mid 20th century Egypt. I have argued that after the act of exile has occurred, from the apparent safety of sanctuary abroad, decertification becomes, or is already, internalised to the movement. Historically external authorities were required to discourage activism, yet the act of exile is so traumatic that the need for external factors becomes replaced by rumour and fear in the new context abroad. Brokerage offers, in part, a way of breaking the decertification loop

as political entrepreneurs connect exiles with local allies who are motivated to create and exploit political opportunities.

Herein lie the key findings of this study, reflecting the broader trend in social movement research to progress beyond traditional cause-effect explanations to unpack the mechanisms which bring about puzzling variations. Decertification and brokerage can be said to have general purchase given they have been observed in a wide variety of contexts prior to this research. Their relevance here is that they can be seen to amount to evidence that exile is a process rather than an event. Taken in aggregate they offer one explanation for why exiled activism takes the form it does, yet more profoundly, they demonstrate why exile may hinder yet not spell an end to political participation. That is not to say this explanation is exhaustive; I have not, due to restrictions, touched upon the discourse of exiled activism. Framing processes are a well-established aspect of social movement theory. Nonetheless this explanation may well, subject to further research, be shown to hold for the process of exile generally. The case selection and comparative case study design were intended to support this suggestion. Exile should be considered one of the major processes of contentious politics, along with well established areas of investigation such as mobilisation, revolution and democratisation.

The role of rumour and fear raise interesting questions for existing accounts of why and how mobilisation occurs more generally. Rumours, by definition unsubstantiated, challenge the notion that the decision to participate is based on rational calculation. In fact, the evidence in this paper raises the possibility that fears preventing participation may be in some senses irrational, based as they are on unsubstantiated claims. What matters more to whether mobilisation occurs, and in which forms, are historical processes and causal mechanisms.

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to my informants for their help. I hope they benefit from the findings of this study. My parents Stephen and Alison have always helped and supported me throughout my studies. The following researchers provided invaluable feedback on this project; Máire Braniff, Markus Ketola, Rory O'Connell, Colin Clark, Cillian McGrattan, Kevin Adamson, Lea Sgier, Philip Marfleet, Jack Mowbray, Yusuf Magiya and Anna McKeever.

Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

Funding

This work was supported by a DEL scholarship.

References

Abdalla, A. 1985. *The Student Movement and National Politics in Egypt: 1923-1973*. Cairo: AUC Press.

Abdelrahman, M. 2011. 'The Transnational and the local: Egyptian activists and transnational protest networks'. *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*. 38, 3: 407–424.

Ali, Mostaffa. 2011. 'Conversation with an Egyptian Socialist'. *Socialist Worker*. http://socialistworker.org/2011/02/23/interview-with-egyptian-socialist

Baraulina, T., Bommes, M., El-Cherkeh, T., Daume, H., and Vadean, F. 2007. *Egyptian, Afghan, and Serbian diaspora communities in Germany: How do they contribute to their country of origin?* Hamburg Institute of International Economics (HWWI).

Beach, D. and Pedersen, R. 2016. 'Selecting Appropriate Cases when Tracing Causal Mechanisms.' *Sociological Methods & Research*. 47,4: 1 – 35.

Bennett, L. and Segerberg, A. 2012. 'The logic of connective action'. *Information, Communication & Society*. 15, 5.

Binningsbø, H., Loyle, C, Gates, S. and Elster, J. 2012. Armed conflict and post-conflict justice, 1946–2006. *Journal of Peace Research*. 49, 5: 731 – 740.

Blaydes, Lisa. 2008. *Elections and Distributive Politics in Mubarak's Egypt*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Caldwell, Robert G. 1943. 'Exile as an Institution.' *Political Science Quarterly*. 58, 2: 254.

Channel 4 News. 2015. Muslim Brotherhood: 'possible extremists' but no UK ban. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mE3Wo9UaLpA

Committee to Protect Journalists. 2017. Journalists Imprisoned in 2017. https://cpj.org/data/imprisoned/2017/

Cornejo, Marcella. 2008. 'Political Exile and the Construction of Identity: A Life Stories Approach'. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*. 18. 333-348.

Shahidian, H. (2000). 'Sociology and Exile: Banishment and Tensional Loyalties'. *Current Sociology*. 48(2), 71-99.

Edinger, L.J. 1956. *German Exile Politics: The Social Democratic Executive Committee in the Nazi Era*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

el-Hamalawy, Hossam. 'Egypt's Revolution Has Been 10 Years in the Making'. *The Guardian*, December 31, 2015. http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2011/mar/02/egypt-revolution-mubarak-wall-of-fear.

Erlich, Haggai. *Students and University in 20th Century Egyptian Politics*. London: Routledge, 2005.

Falleti, T. G. and pJ. F. Lynch. 'Context and Causal Mechanisms in Political Analysis.' *Comparative Political Studies* 42, no. 9 (April 21, 2009): 1143–1166.

Fine, Gary. 2013 Rumor in collective behavior and social in *The Wiley-Blackwell encyclopaedia of social and political movements*. Snow, David (ed.) Berkeley: Wiley-Blackwell

Fine, G.A., and Turner, P.A. (2001) *Whispers on the Color Line: Rumor and Race in America*. University of California Press, Berkeley

Forsdyke, Sarah. 2005. *Exile, Ostracism and Democracy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Fowler, Floyd. 2009. *Survey Research Methods*. London: Sage.

Gentile, Antonina. 2016. 'World-System Hegemony and How the Mechanism of Certification Skews Intra-European Labor Solidarity'. *Mobilization: An International Quarterly* 21, 1: 105–27.

Ghonim, Wael. 2012. *Revolution 2.0*. New York: Houghton Mifflin.

Global Nonviolent Action Database. 'Kefaya Protests Mubarak's Referendum and Re-Election, Egypt, 2005'. Accessed March 18, 2016. http://nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu/print/content/kefaya-protests-mubaraks-referendum-and-re-election-egypt-2005.

Hashim, Ahmed. 'The Egyptian Military, Part Two: From Mubarak Onward.' *Middle East Policy* 18, 4 (December 2011): 106–128.

Jenkins, J. and Farr, C. 2015. Muslim Brotherhood Review: Main Findings.UK Government: London, Westminster. https://web.archive.org/web/20151224103901/https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/486932/Muslim_Brotherhood_Review_Main_Findings.pdf

Khalil, Ashraf. 2012. *Liberation Square: Inside the Egyptian Revolution and the Rebirth of a Nation*. London: St Martin's Press.

Kunz, E.F. 1973. 'The Refugee in Flight: Kinetic Models and Forms of Displacement'. *International Migration Review*. 7,2: 125-146.

Lewis, David and David Mosse. 2006. *Development brokers and translators: The ethnography of aid and agencies*. Bloomfield, CT: Kumarian Press.

Lim, Merlyna. 'Clicks, Cabs, and Coffee Houses: Social Media and Oppositional Movements in Egypt, 2004-2011'. J*ournal of Communication* 62, 2 (February 23, 2012): 231–48.

Lutterbeck, D. 'Arab Uprisings, Armed Forces, and Civil-Military Relations'. *Armed Forces & Society* 39, 1 (April 13, 2012): 28–52.

Mada Masr. 2015, August 14. On Rabea anniversary, rights groups release slew of statements calling for justice. https://www.madamasr.com/en/2015/08/14/news/u/on-rabea-anniversary-rights-groups-release-slew-of-statements-calling-for-justice/

———. 2015, November 5. Protests punctuate Sisi's first day in London. https://www.madamasr.com/en/2015/11/05/news/u/protests-punctuate-sisis-first-day-in-london/

——— 2015. Internal rifts in the Muslim Brotherhood become more public. Mada Masr. http://www.madamasr.com/en/2015/12/15/news/u/internal-rifts-in-the-muslim-brotherhood-become-more-public/.

Marfleet, Philip. 2013. 'Mubarak's Egypt – Nexus of Criminality', *State Crime*, 2, 112–34.

———. 2016a. The political subject in the 'Arab Spring'. *Contemporary Levant*, 1(1), pp.4-11.

———. 2016b. *Egypt: Contested Revolution*. 1st ed. London: Pluto Press.

Middle East Solidarity Spring 2016

Naguib, Sameh. 2011. 'The Islamists and the Egyptian Revolution'. *Socialist Review*. (359) http://socialistreview.org.uk/359/islamists-and-egyptian-revolution

Oweidat, N., Benard, C., Stahl, D., Kildani, W., O'Connell, E., & Grant, A. K. 2008. The Kefaya movement: a case study of a grassroots reform initiative. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation. Retrieved from http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs /2008/RAND_MG778.sum.pdf.

Polletta, F. 2006. *It Was Like a Fever: Storytelling in Protest and Politics*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

Rich, David. 2010. The Very Model of a British Muslim Brotherhood. In Rubin B. (ed) *The Muslim Brotherhood. The Middle East in Focus*. Palgrave Macmillan, New York.

Roemer, Stephanie. 2008. *The Tibetan Government in Exile: Politics at Large*. New York: Routledge.

Yossi Shain and Aharon Barth (2003) 'Diasporas and International Relations Theory' *International Organization*, Vol. 57, No. 3 pp. 449-479

Shain, Yossi. 1989. *The Frontier of Loyalty: Political Exiles in the Age of the Nation-State*. Middletown: Wesleyan University Press.

——— 2009. 'Who is a Political Exile? Defining a Field of Study for Political Science'. *International Migration*. 387-400.

Shaw, Christine. 2000. *The Politics of Exile in Renaissance Italy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Shibutani, T. 1966. *Improvised News: The Sociological Study of Rumor*. Bobbs-Merrill, Indianapolis.

Staggenborg, Suzanne 2002. 'Semi-structured interviewing in social movement research' in Klandermans, Bert and Staggenborg Suzanne (eds) *Methods of social movement research*. Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press.

Sznajder, Mario. and Roniger, Luis. 2007. Exile communities and their differential institutional dynamics: a comparative analysis of the Chilean and Uruguayan political diasporas.' *Revista de ciencia politica* 27(1) 43-66.

———. 2009. *The Politics of Exile in Latin America*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Tarrow, Sidney and Tilly, Charles. 2012. *Contentious Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Torres, Maria. 1999. *In the Land of Mirrors: Cuban Exile Politics in the United States*. Michigan: University of Michigan Press.

Underhill, H. (2016). Learning in revolution: perspectives on democracy from Egypt's UK-based diaspora activists. *Contemporary Levant*, 1(1), pp.25-37.

Vatikiotis. P.J. 1978. *Nasser and his Generation*. London: Croom Helm.

Vatikiotis. P.J. 1980. *The History of Egypt*. California: Weidenfeld and Nicolson

Whine, Michael. 2005 The Advance of the Muslim Brotherhood in the UK in Hillel Fradkin, Husain Haqqani & Eric Brown, eds., "Current trends in Islamist Ideology", Volume 2, Center on Islam, Democracy, and the Future of the Muslim World, Washington DC: The Hudson Institute, 2005, pp. 30-39.

Wickham, Carrie Rosefsky. 2008. *The Muslim Brotherhood: Evolution of an Islamist Movement*. United States: Princeton University Press.

Rumour and Decertification in Exile Politics: Evidence from the Egyptian Case

Rumour and Decertification in Exile Politics: Evidence from the Egyptian Case

Does exile affect activism and if so how? In this paper the case of Egyptian activists exiled in England is taken as illustrative of processes typical of exiled activism. The case study draws on primary and secondary sources including a series of biographical interviews with exiled activists. The analysis compares activism in Egypt with exiled activism in England using the participants' critical self-reflections to explain the mechanisms mediating the changes. Contrary to reasonable expectations that exile is a spontaneous response to a change in political context, the conditions for exile predate banishment and lie within the institutions of dictatorship which decertify activism. Decertification continues throughout the exile process as fear of repression becomes internalised within the movement. Within the sanctuary of the host country a process of brokerage counteracts decertification expanding and modifying the exile repertoire.

Keywords: social movements, exile, rumour, decertification, contentious politics, Arab Spring

Introduction

Exiled Activism: A New Focus for Social Movement Theory

Before, during, even after activists' flight from their home countries, dictatorial regimes undermine their participation in contentious politics. This paper addresses one of the surprising ways exile continues to deter activism, even from the relative safety of sanctuary abroad, yet how exiled activists do manage to assert relevance through integration. I designed the research in this paper to provide answers to questions about the effects exile has on mobilising structures. Are activists able to turn their exile to the advantage of their cause, by exploiting a new structure of opportunities abroad? While activists did bring networks and repertoires with them, they needed encouragement and assurances from each other and from new allies as their motivation was low and their security concerns high.

Shain (1989) has argued exile means different things to different people because it is a political term with no agreed definition in international law. Sociologists view exiles as socially deviant while psychologists and legal scholars both view exiles as variants of refugees. He continues, a point I concur with, that activism by exiles is important enough to warrant a particular definition for political science analyses (Shain, 2009: 387, 388). I extend Shain's definition, arguing that from the perspective of political science 'exile' is a social phenomenon, more specifically a political process, best understood through the prism of social movement theory.

Exile exists at the fringes of political science. It falls outside domestic politics but is not quite a matter of international relations (Roemer, 2008: 4). Nonetheless it has consequences for both, having been practiced throughout history (Shaw, 2000: 4). It was a feature of both ancient Greek (Forsdyke, 2005) and Roman politics (Shaw, 2000).

'Exile' is therefore a modern way to describe an ancient practice. In the twentieth century relevant research included psychological studies of the impact the isolation of exile has on the psyche and articulations of personal identity (Edinger, 1956; Kunz, 1973). Sznajder and Roniger accurately describe exile as "a mechanism of institutional exclusion – not the only one – by which a person involved in politics and public life, or perceived by power holders as such, is forced or pressed to leave his or her home country or place of residence, unable to return until a change in political circumstances takes place" (Sznajder and Roniger, 2009: 11).

They have made this argument in detail elsewhere in a study claiming the rise of exile organisations (NGOs and intergovernmental agencies) in the 1970s altered the context for transnational activism favourably for activists (Sznajder and Roniger, 2007). Shain and Ahran (2003) documented a similar process in the United States where organised exiles have had success in lobbying on foreign policy. Unlike these studies

that focused on *private* forms of political participation such as lobbying and financial flows the subject of this paper is the continuing *public* political participation of exiles.

The evidence in this paper is from the case of Egyptians living in England. This case is important in its own right but also has important lessons for social movement theory. Since 2013 the military in Egypt has retaken control of the state apparatus, massacring its main opponent, quelling a popular uprising and instigating a period of terror unknown in Egypt since the 1950s (Marfleet, 2016). For most of the period of this research Egypt was the country with the second highest number of journalists jailed, but has since been surpassed by Turkey (CPJ, 2017). The reintroduction of protest laws has made any public gathering, let alone political claim-making, offences carrying a prison sentence. Not for the first time in Egyptian history the terrifying practice of 'disappearances' has become a norm. Egyptians moving to England are in this context moving from one of the most repressive countries globally to one of the freest. If activists can mobilise anywhere surely it is in one of the worlds' oldest democracies. Nonetheless, the little large-*n* data there is on exile suggests that activists forced abroad after a military takeover sit more or less on the line of best fit in the distribution of cases (Binningsbø *et al*, 2012). The case is therefore so extreme, yet so typical on key indicators, it is reasonable to think lessons can be drawn for theory and for other activists elsewhere (Beach and Pedersen, 2016).

Using the example of the Egyptian case, I was able to disaggregate the process of exile into a number of mechanisms, in this paper I discuss two; decertification[1] and

[1] Decertification has been defined "as an external authority's signal that it is withdrawing recognition and support from a political actor" (Tarrow and Tilly, 2012: 215). Gentile's ethnographic and archival research, of relevance, has identified contractual blockages in

brokerage.[2] The fact of decertification continuing after exile implies a legacy effect of an historical path dependency as successive Egyptian governments have sought to delegitimise activism. I find evidence of this in the prevalence of rumours and fear, internalised within the movement. Brokerage counteracts this in the sense of cooperation between exiles and newfound allies enlarging the scope of political opportunities.

In putting this case study together, I assembled sources of evidence which I analysed relying on concepts from process tracing and the theoretical framework provided by contentious politics. I favoured a qualitative approach to evidencing these mechanisms for two reasons. First, I followed advice in the literature about difficulties in identifying indicators of mechanisms and the strength of case studies in developing observations of mechanisms (Falletti and Lynch, 2008; Staggenborg, 2002). Second, life-history inspired approaches are well-suited to studies of exile. This has to do with a variety of factors ranging from the personal intimacy of the exile experience to the protracted character of the process of exile (Cornejo, 2008; Shahidian, 2000).

---

certification which have prevented European trade unions from coalition building (Gentile, 2016).

[2] In contentious politics brokerage is commonly understood as the "production of a new connection between previously unconnected or weakly connected sites" (Tarrow and Tilly, 2012: 215). In historical cases SMOs were the only suitably resourced actors to function as brokers, but in the age of social media this role can be taken over by looser knit associations or even individuals (Bennet and Segerberg, 2012). Hence, in pre-exile Egyptian activism researchers have argued the mechanism brokerage as part of a transnational diffusion process, was crucial in increasing the frequency and volume of contention in Egypt in the years preceding the Tahrir revolution (Abdelrahman, 2011).

The research lasted three years involving four field trips, three in London, one in Manchester as well as video conference style interviews with Egyptians living in London, Cambridge, Birmingham, Exeter, Manchester and Liverpool. In all I interviewed twenty-two Egyptians resident in England, plus six allies and observers of the London Egyptian activism scene. I used the interviews to understand the participants' critical self-interpretations of why they did or did not participate in activism. In seeking to understand how exile affected activism it was necessary to examine the history of exiled activism, and the level of detail that required exceeded the memory of even the most observant eye-witness. The descriptive parts of the case study are therefore also based on documentary sources of various types. Using the Nexus database I corroborated as many of these events as possible based on reports in national UK newspapers, regional English newspapers and local London newspapers. A further source was the activist organisations (SMOs) themselves. SMOs produce literature that is of interest and in the age of social media inadvertently create a record of their activities through public event invitations.

The paper begins with a fresh account of the history of Egyptian activism in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, reinterpreted in light of modern theories of contentious politics. This account is brief, sufficient to contrast with the rest of the paper which contains an account of exiled activism in England, mostly in London. I consider the 'exile movement' in terms of its organisation and its actions. I argue that both in terms of recruitment and participation decertification continues to act as a deterrent as activists fear the reach of the military regime through the London embassy. The paper concludes with a comparison of the conditions and mechanisms of activism before and after exile in which I try to suggest the ways that the experience of Egyptians in England may contribute significant observations to theories of contentious politics.

Historical Roots of Decertification

The root causes of contemporary Egyptian exile are to be found not in the recent coup d'etat, but in another one, more than half a century earlier. Nasser's coup in 1952 closed off political opportunities for activists and initiated the process of decertification that pushed activists seeking to create their own opportunities to the margins, to the ultimate extent of exile in the modern era.[3] Following the Free Officer's (FO) coup the first social group to voice their political claims were textile workers in the industrial town Kafr Al-Dawr. Their protest was an industrial dispute with their private sector employers over pay and conditions that was not necessarily a matter of contentious politics.[4] However, the workers shrewdly took advantage of political instability caused by the FO coup to frame their claims as politically motivated. Although their

---

[3] Context for this argument comes in an extended quote from Marfleet (2016). Marfleet presents evidence masterfully demonstrating the ideology underpinning decertification was brought to Egypt by British colonisers. He goes on to argue this was opportunistically appropriated later by secular Egyptian autocrats (Marfleet, 2016: 21-23).

> "In Egypt, occupied by British forces in 1882, the colonial administration combined suspicion of the mass of people with a conviction that they lacked capacities to modify both their material circumstances and their subordinate political status. According to the British administrator Alfred (later Viscount) Milner, the people of Egypt were 'docile and good tempered'; they were 'a nation of submissive slaves, not only bereft of any vestige of liberal institutions but devoid of any spark of the spirit of liberty; (Milner, 2002 [1892]: 178). At the same time they were 'in the grip of a religion the most intolerant and fanatical' (Milner, 2002 [1892]:2). Egyptians required European rule and reform: British military occupation, Milner suggested, had succeeded in bringing a 'revolution' to their lives in the form of new institutions of administration and justice (Milner, 2002 [1982]: 5)." (Marleet, 2016: 18).

[4] Strictly speaking contentious politics are interactions involving state actors.

declarations of loyalty to the new regime may have helped convince management (well known supporters of the monarchy that was replaced by the FO) to make concessions the response of the state made the new regime's approach to activism clear. Five-hundred and forty-nine strikers were arrested with three leaders sentenced to death (one received a reduced life sentence). This event established the precedent for activism in the first two terms of indigenous Egyptian dictatorship (Abdalla, 1985; Erlich, 1989; Vatikiotis, 1978; Vatikiotis, 1980).

The years from 1968 until 1976 were years of student radicalism.[5] In particular the episodes of 1968 and 1972 have become known in the popular history of student activism as years of 'uprising'. This phase of activism was also initiated by perceptions of political instability when workers marched in protest against defeat in the six-day war between Israel and the Arab nations. In 1968 following workers' protests at Helwan students at Cairo University formed a twelve-man committee to coordinate and organise protests in solidarity with marching workers. This committee organised contentious performances including marches, sit-ins and static demonstrations. Members of the committee were allowed into the parliament to put their demands to Sadat who at the time was speaker of the house; they were later arrested. The committee also managed to coordinate, by telephone, simultaneous student marches in Cairo and Alexandria.

[5] The historical record of activism contains a gap between 1954 and 1968. "In the following days students passed beyond the university gates and made their presence felt on the streets of Cairo and Alexandria for the first time since 1954." (Abdalla, 1985: 149,150). "The student riots and workers' demonstrations of February 1968, however, came as an unexpected blow to Nasser's recovery from the 1967 debacle. In magnitude and ferocity they were the first since 1954, indeed since 1952." (Vatikiotis, 1978: 185).

The dearth of activism during the first two terms of indigenous dictatorship is in part explained by repression, but also due to the replacement of political parties with unique, pro-regime mass-parties designed to redirect political claim-making[6] (Abdalla, 1985: 127; Binder, 1969: 401; Wickham, 2002: 29). That this was successful in commencing the process of decertification in this period is evident in the re-emergence of more explicitly political protest in Mubarak's era, with the reestablishment of a (flawed) multi-party system.[7] When, in 2003, America invaded Iraq, protesters gathered in Cairo's Tahrir Square (Sachs, 2003). The protests were not overtly subversive as their demands were anti-American, not anti-Mubarak. Yet they met with repression and dispersal, a job the police were ruthless in carrying out. Through criticism of American foreign policy Egyptian protesters were criticising their own allied government by association.

Following the anti-war demonstrations Tahrir Square became a regular venue for protest (Interview 1, 4). The Egyptian public became accustomed to two relatively novel aspects of political expression and one well known aspect: public claim-making, organised protest and repression. The first to organise were 'Kefaya!': a group of pro-democracy activists whose name in Arabic means 'Enough!'. Kefaya were primarily protesting censorship under the regime and merely asserted their claimed right to protest (Interview 6). Their more ambitious long-term aim, however, was to prevent a Mubarak

---

[6] "[T]hey [the FO] were not opposed to parties as such, only to their corrupt leaders. Thus the Liberation Rally was designed not as a party, but as an instrument for the reorganisation of popular forces." Nasser quoted in (Vatikiotis, 1978: 134).

[7] The exception to this trend towards politicisation being protests surrounding the Danish publication of cartoons depicting images offensive to some Muslims (Sami, Al-Ahram, 2006).

family succession and ensure the presidency did not fall to Hosni's son Gamal (Marfleet, 2016, 49). Their first protest was small. Protesters gathered in Tahrir square for a silent protest wearing yellow stickers on their mouth to symbolise the regime's censorship (El-Mahdi, 2009: 89; Khalil, 2012: 62). The protest was repressed (Naguib, 2011: 9; Oweidat et al, 2008: 11).

Yet Kefaya continued agitation and from time to time staged protests (GNAD, 2005). Their method was innovative for the period as they organised entirely online. The absence of a physical headquarters in their earliest days seems to have guarded against surveillance by a regime caught by surprise. Even after the activists disbanded the group left a legacy on Egyptian activism in various blogs which served as an alternative press in the days before a regime to could dismiss citizen journalism as 'fake news' (Lim, 2012; 235-238).

A new group of activists led by Ahmed Maher tried to broaden the base of protest by calling a general strike on the 6th of April 2008. The strike led to two days of violent clashes between riot police and workers at Egypt's largest textile factory at the Nile delta (Khalil, 2012: 72,73). The group took the date April 6th as their name. The strike was intended to extend opposition to include both the youth and the industrial working class (Interview 1; Marfleet, 2016: 50). The movement was successful in this regard. In discussions exiles in England have stressed the ongoing motivational effects of the solidarity achieved between social classes during the April 6 campaign (Interviews 1, 5, 6, 7). Observers such as Naguib and Marfleet (2016, 50) have argued the networks developed between activists and trade unions during this campaign mattered more to mobilisation in the 2011 revolution than the networks developed by Kefaya.

Summary: The Transformation of Activism in Egypt

As political opportunities in Egypt were monopolised by the regime, activism underwent a process of decertification. The historical record shows that not only was activism discouraged it was also physically contained. Whereas when Nasser took power in the 1950s contention had been geographically dispersed, with the industrial periphery at least as active as the centres of political and executive power in Cairo and Alexandria. This containment of activism is further evident in the Egyptian activism repertoire. At the beginning of the period surveyed protesters marched as they made their claims. Then, by the modern period when basically all activism had migrated to Cairo, the 'occupation' style protest came to dominate, almost as if the protests had come to a standstill. Today, even outside of Egypt, 'Tahrir' is often taken as a symbol of liberation and rebellion. Viewed through this historical lens it seems just as reasonable to think of it not as a liberated space but as one where activists are cornered.

Decertification: The Effects of Rumours within the Movement

Decertification continues to operate even after the act of exile, prohibiting new mobilisations from abroad. In particular, decertification at this micro-sociological level manifests itself in the spread of rumours within activist circles, or mobilising structures.[8] As rumours are endogenous (to the mobilising structures) this suggests that

[8] The observation this section discusses was made in the field and did change my research plan significantly. In private discussions with exiles I noticed the pattern of otherwise reasonable, some highly educated, people voicing quite spectacular worries, bordering on conspiracy. When I noted the possibility I was observing decertification in action I refined my interview questions to test for this without leading the interviewee. Rather than ask about rumours and fears directly I would ask about challenges in mobilising activists or reasons for non-

decertification behaves, after a point, in a way that is self-reinforcing. Pre-exile institutional path dependence delegitimised activism or focussed political claim-making within arenas that did not challenge the regime's hegemony. Post-exile decertification has become a part of the movement itself as fear and rumour (founded or unfounded) inhibit the diffusion of activism.

Egyptians arriving in England are accustomed to fear and mistrust of authority. Although they are objectively safer in England their previous life experiences have taught them to avoid political contestations. Previous researchers have argued that Egyptians abroad are as mistrustful of authority as Egyptians at home citing examples such as occasions of Egyptians forgoing their right to vote at the local embassy due to fear of surveillance (Morsi, 2000; Baraulina et al, 2007). Yet that is not to suggest that within exile mobilising structures any general sense of conspiracy or atmosphere of intrigue exists. My anecdotal experience in the field is that Egyptian exiles are more or less reasonable people and this sense is echoed by other researchers working with the same group (Underhill, 2016). Nonetheless unfounded rumours are actively prohibiting mobilisations.

Rumour

Rumour is known to social movement scholars as a variable that can compel panics or equally initiate a mobilisation (Fine and Turner, 2001; Polletta, 2006). By rumour, I mean, quite narrowly, information that is spread without "secure standards of evidence"

---

participation. I would follow up within the same interview or in further correspondence if a participant did describe rumours to me by asking them more directly about rumour and fear, in this way I felt confident that I had checked my interpretations with the participants, without putting words in their mouth.

(Fine, 2013: 1594). For empirical reasons there is no need to think of rumours as being more or less widespread. What matters here is the impact rumours can have on mobilisation. A rumour can have no truth yet still have enough purchase to dissuade potential activists from joining a march.[9]

Rumours damage the reputations of SMOs. In Egypt the revolutionary socialists were rumoured to have been infiltrated by Egyptian secret police (Interview 4, 6, 11). The leadership of the RSE in England deny this (Ali, 2011). Evidence supports the RSE's claims to independence; several of their members are currently political prisoners (Interview 7,14). (Yet the nature of conspiracy theories is that they cannot be falsified with counter-evidence). Would-be RSE supporters and volunteers in English exile looked for British organisations, the British Communist Party and Socialist Workers Party, to work with instead of the RSE in order to avoid surveillance by Egyptian security forces (Interview 6, 11). Counterfactually it is possible that this rumour of infiltration accounts for the absence of Egyptian SMOs from the English scene, significant given that former senior activists from both Kefaya and April 6 now live in London (Interview 6). Both Kefaya and April 6 have been victims of the same rumours (Interview 3, 7). Later I will discuss brokerage as a counterweight to decertification, using the example of the Justice for Giulio campaign. In fact RSE activists collaborating with UK SMOs such as the Socialist Workers Party provide an example of brokered solutions to the challenges of rumours. RSE activists addressing SWP conferences

[9] Collective action situations are the ideal conditions for rumours to spread. Shibutani (1966) argued as much in his analysis of rumours in Japanese-American internment camps. Polletta (2006) found similar results in her study of movement diffusion. In these studies researchers observed activists developing rumours either to fill in gaps in official discourse, or to counter information from official sources that was contrary to their movement's discourse.

redirects the energy of activists deterred by rumours of infiltration at the same time as expanding activist networks and repertoires.

As mentioned above, it does not seem unreasonable to suggest Egyptians may broadly distrust authority. This is a normal outcome of decades of dictatorship. Given the brutality of the Egyptian regime there are legitimate security concerns surrounding Egyptian activism, even from exile.[10] A surprising number of Egyptians in London view of the Egyptian embassy as an institution whose function is surveillance of the Egyptian diaspora. Would-be activists worry that if they are identified by diplomatic staff they will be arrested when they return to Egypt to visit their family. Indeed some activists do claim that they are subjected to harassment by airport security every time they fly to or from Cairo (Interview 10). Related to this Egyptians worry that if they are identified as part of an opposition abroad their families in Egypt will be harassed or even arrested by security forces (Interview 10). In this sense, the Egyptian embassy is a bold choice of location for protests by the MB.

Rumours about the role of the Egyptian embassy and about repercussions for family have a direct impact on participation in contentious actions. Both Egyptian and UK based SMOs are aware of these concerns and have strategies for tackling them.

---

[10] This is among the reasons I have protected the identities of my informants. Although the Egyptians I worked with in England were probably the bravest people I will ever meet, their real security concerns affected my work from the offset. Basically every activist I met assumed I was working undercover for the Egyptian embassy. This meant I could not interview activists online, which would have reduced the costs of the study. I had to go to London to meet these people and earn their trust. Even then, the Egyptian exiles I met are so mistrustful I was unable to ever employ a snowball sampling technique as had been my intention.

More than any SMO, supporters of the MB have managed to mobilise protesters on the street. Partly this is attributable to their persistence organising events on a monthly, sometimes fortnightly, basis. Partly it is attributable to the style of event they host, with entertainment on a family friendly model, which makes the events feel less contentious. ESI experimented briefly with coordinating protest campaigns in England and Egypt simultaneously but decided to restrict their activities to the UK, partly to allay fears of repercussions for family members (Interview 13). Activists within the movement, both Egyptian and non-Egyptian, have noticed these issues and acted as brokers to overcome the challenges of decertification.

Unlike in the broader historical sense decertification at this stage in the exile process does not rely on any actual input from external authorities. Activists have internalised perceptions of the regime's danger and power (which in part motivated their original flight) and these are sufficient to ensure decertification continues to function and is in this sense self-reinforcing.

Brokerage: A Counterbalance to Decertification

Sympathetic British activists are as much a part of this story as Egyptians in exile. When motivation is low among Egyptians or security concerns are high there are influential allies there to persuade Egyptians into action or to mobilise on their behalf. Where decertification worked to convince Egyptians activism would either be futile or counter-productive, brokerage was set in motion by 'political entrepreneurs' who brought Egyptians into contact with their allies (Lewis and Mosse, 2006: 13). In order to observe the function of brokerage it is necessary to examine the exile SMOs and their actions in detail. Following the account of exiled activism I will offer the case of Justice for Giulio as a particularly compelling example of the mechanism.

The Muslim Brotherhood in England

Both in organisational terms and in mobilisation capacity the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) have the most extensive apparatus in England. This is partly because their presence in England, and across Europe, has been established since their earlier proscribed periods in the 20th century. Before 2013 MB in England benefited from funding by the Gulf states but none the less lacked the self-confidence to organise under their own name preferring to mobilise through proxy organisations (Rich, 2010: 131; Whine, 2005: 35). After the 2013 coup the Brotherhood reportedly shifted their headquarters to north London to avoid persecution (The Times, May 15, 2015). Yet the move appears to have been abandoned or motivated by PR purposes (Channel 4 News, 2015).

Despite having taken up semi-official residence in London it is more meaningful to talk of the MB in England as an SMO rather than a party. That is to say that given the size of the MB in Egypt and abroad, in London as with other European capitals, the MB have substantial numbers of supporters and followers rather than members over whom the leadership could exert direct control (Interviews 2, 8, 10). So in London, the label SMO appropriately describes the range of more and less formal organisations that support the MB.

The Muslim Association of Britain (MAB), for example, is a respectable Muslim, civil society organisation in the UK that happens to be 'dominated' by supporters of the MB, to use the language of a UK government report (Jenkins and Farr, 2015: 23).[11] The MAB have worked with the UK government in combatting terrorism

[11] The UK government in 2015 published redacted findings from a report into the 'activities' of the MB in the UK at the request of the Saudi government (*The Times*, November 5, 2015).

within the UK, for instance by assisting police in their operation to remove Abu Hamza from his central London mosque. Yet they share the goals and values of the MB, have been active in London mayoral elections (supporting Ken Livingstone and Sadiq Khan) and sending speakers and grassroots members to MB protests (Interview 16). MB supporters in London have an online presence primarily through Facebook pages, in particular R4BIA, British Egyptians for Democracy and Stop Sisi (Jenkins and Farr, 2015: 26). The former is an ongoing campaign that protests regularly on the streets of London and provides an online forum for raising awareness of Brotherhood claims. Stop Sisi is a campaign that was established to mobilise protest on the streets of London to coincide with Sisi's state visit to the UK.

Characterising the Brotherhood's ideology is complicated by internal debates (Naguib, 2009: 105). These in turn shed more light on the specific character of the organisation in London. The London leadership in late 2015 were embroiled in a power struggle with the new Egyptian leadership which had elected a radical spokesperson who had publicly condoned the use of violence in politics. London attempted to impose a moderate candidate for leader suggesting the commitment to democracy in England is strong (Mada Masr, 2015). As is well known the Muslim Brotherhood's ideology is Islamist and their commitment to democracy has for most of their history been far from assured. Nonetheless their claims to democratic legitimacy have dominated their discourse in the west since the Raab'a massacre of 2013 in which the military dictatorship brutally killed thousands of their members and supporters. The Brotherhood pioneered the 'secret cell' structure that has characterised Islamist groups subsequently and therefore it is futile to attempt to put a figure to their English membership. Nonetheless it is clear to any observer who has spent time attending protests or events in London that of all the groups active in England it is the Brotherhood who command the

force of numbers (Underhill, 2016, 28-29). This is partly because unaffiliated Islamists are willing to lend their support to Brotherhood events (Interviews 6, 10).

On the streets of London supporters of the MB have claimed a space for their protests outside of the Egyptian Embassy which they often march to from Marble Arch. Their protests reveal aspects of their discourse that attempts to state their democratic claims to power in Egypt while simultaneously affirming their identity as British Egyptians. For example, bearded Islamists have posed for photos on protest at the embassy atop 'Boris Bikes', civic bicycles introduced to London by former mayor Boris Johnson. Another claim making technique used by MB supporters is the use of protesting wearing the face of deposed MB president Morsi as a mask.

Revolutionary Socialists of Egypt (RSE)

The RSE are a Trotskyist political faction who have operated in Egypt since circa 2003. Similar to the MB some of their prominent and grassroots members have been political prisoners since the 2013 coup. Their numbers have always been smaller than those of the MB, the 2003 protests in solidarity with Palestine remained, until the 2011 revolution, their primary period of recruitment (Ali, 2011). Despite organising in a manner reminiscent of formal political parties the RSE have refused to grant successive Egyptian dictatorships approval by participating in fraudulent elections and have opted instead to voice their political claims through extra-parliamentary yet nonviolent activism (El-Hamalawy, 2011).

Since the coup those members of the RSE leadership who have evaded arrest have relocated to England where they have taken up roles as guest scholars at UK universities. From English exile they have continued their work of peaceful activism, yet unlike the Muslim Brothers the RSE have focussed on working with English activists and spreading their message through dialogue rather than protest (Interview 7).

Revolutionary Socialists have not maintained a presence outside the Egyptian embassy and were absent from anti-Sisi protests at Downing street (Interview 10, 15). The RSE have nurtured connections with British socialist organisations such as the Socialist Workers Party whose conference they have addressed three years running (Interview 7).

Egypt Solidarity Initiative (ESI)

When Egyptians in exile have shown reticence voicing their political claims, sympathetic allies have mobilised on their behalf, doing what they could to encourage exiled activism. Since 2014 The Egypt Solidarity Initiative (ESI) has developed a brand that is known within activist circles. A nimble and effective outfit, born of the UK trade union movement, ESI mobilises union resources around campaigns in solidarity with the repressed workers movement in Egypt. Nimble because, rather than develop a new organisation, when its organisers perceived a need for an Egypt specific campaign they launched the organisation as a campaign belonging to, and with access to resources belonging to, a previously established wing of trade unionism, the MENA solidarity network (Interview 14). Similar to other SMOs discussed in this paper ESI are able to operate with, in this case, union resources with comparatively low costs as they avoid the administration involved with a formal membership structure. Grassroots ESI activists are volunteers borrowed from trade union and student movements whose actions are directed (in a collective sense) by a permanent steering group (Interviews 14, 15).

Their effectiveness, a function of tactics, is evident in movement outcomes. ESI campaigns have reached a level of brand recognition such that on most campaign literature the ESI logo appears alongside the MENA solidarity logo in order to lend some prestige to the latter, although the two are in reality not distinct units (Interview 13). The steering group officially includes names well known in UK politics from the

trade union movement such as the late Bob Crowe, John McDonnell and Jeremy Corbyn who were present at the founding meeting and lend their own prestige to the movement. Day to day however the group is staffed by a core of dedicated activists who have day jobs, are less well known to the UK public, and for varying reasons happen to have a particular interest in the Egyptian workers movement (Interviews 14, 15).

ESI are open about their trade union funding sources which are listed on their website in order to avoid accusations of political subterfuge by Egyptian authorities. For the same reason (in addition to security fears) ESI restrict their activism to within the UK. Since 2014 they have staged a number of creative public protests in London designed to draw public attention to human rights violations and workers' struggles in Egypt. An analogous tactic has been to piggy-back on larger protests, such as students marches and protests after Brexit in order to spread their message at street level.

Their most ambitious, and probably most effective, actions have been two conferences on the topic of Arab counter-revolutions and the publication a quarterly journal, in the format of a glossy magazine.

Non-partisan Activism

Other activists in England prefer to lend their support to events rather than to any group or ideology. These people are the grassroots of the movement, which is something distinct from a political party in any case. Movements, more than parties, are fluid and share supporters between and across chapters. These activists are the real colour and emotion of the exile scene. There is, for example, an Egyptian singer living in London who in 2011 had performed on stage in Tahrir Square songs she had composed for the revolution. She left Egypt following the coup and now sings love songs in night clubs around England but also performs the songs of revolution at exile protests (Interview 9). Her songs are popular within the exile community, but probably more popular with

activist organisers who implicitly or explicitly understand that music can offer more selective incentives (the solution to Olsen's collective action problem) than a noble cause can.

Several alliances have been established between exiles and British activists. Several Labour MPs have devoted parliamentary and extra-parliamentary resources to working with the movement. John McDonnell is a long-term member of the ESI steering committee and along with Jeremy Corbyn have both appeared on ESI marches (Interview 14; Middle East Solidarity Autumn 2015: 22). Daniel Zeichner, discussed in more detail below, the Labour MP for Cambridge has worked with Amnesty and ESI on the campaign against police brutality in Egypt (Interview 13). Even the artist Banksy has worked with Egyptian exiles who worked on the Arab Spring themed artwork in his 'Dismaland' exhibition (Interview 7; Mada Masr, September 27, 2015).

Justice for Giulio

We have already considered brief examples of brokerage at work in how SMOs dealt with the challenges of decertification. Take the campaign surrounding Giulio Regeini as illustrative of the process in more detail.[12] Brokerage is at work whenever activists cooperate, and is of greater analytical significance whenever SMOs cooperate, the case of Regeini is an excellent example of SMOs cooperating with non-movement actors

[12] An equally telling example is that of the protests surrounding president Sisi's visit to Downing Street. These protests brought the full ideological spectrum of exiled activists onto the streets in common cause (as well as a bus of Sisi supporters) (*The Times*, November 5, 2015; Middle East Solidarity, Spring 2016: 22). However, in the run up to the visit MB activists actually reached out to secular and socialist organisations to coordinate activities (Interviews 5, 10, 15; *The Independent*, June 18, 2015).

over a sustained campaign. Regeini was an Italian PhD student at Cambridge University researching independent trade union activity in post-revolution Egypt. He died in Egypt while on field work, his death bearing all the hallmarks of murder by the secret police. His body, found by the side of the road, bore the scars of torture. The case caused some outrage in the UK and Italy. For Egyptians torture and disappearance are common occurrences which invariably go unreported in the West. Regeini's death brought the story home to UK news audience. A campaign called Justice for Giulio was set up by political entrepreneurs who brought Egyptian and English activists together.

The campaign began when the MP for Cambridge, Daniel Zeichner, took ownership of the matter and contacted Amnesty International (Interviews 5, 13, 14). He proposed a partnership to raise the profile of the issue. Zeichner, on his own initiative, first handled the case as a constituency matter acting independently. He raised the issue in parliament working with opposition MPs to raise an early day motion calling on the government to investigate the causes of death. He met with staff at Cambridge University to review security and ethical procedures. He also met with Regeini's parents at the European parliament. However, Zeichner, worked with Amnesty to bring the power of activism to bear on the issue. Zeichner organised town hall meetings in Cambridge where the issue was important to students and residents. Meetings were addressed by Zeichner as well as representatives of Amnesty, ESI (on the invitation of Amnesty) and the National Union of Journalists (NUJ) (Interview 12). The campaign spread as Amnesty produced campaign materials (placards, t-shirts, leaflets) which ESI took to the streets, campuses and conferences. ESI also used their magazine to report on and raise the profile of the issue.

The case may have had more resonance for the wider British audience than it did for Egyptian exiles, who, while they sympathised with Regeini, also understood that

torture, disappearance and state killings are an ordinary part of life in Egypt. Brokerage kicked in when Zeichner performed the functions of a political entrepreneur, connecting previously unconnected groups, including but not restricted to Amnesty, ESI, and the NUJ, initiating a fresh wave of activism in so doing. This example is compelling because it illustrates how, by connecting diverse SMOs and allies around a single issue the mechanism fundamentally altered the character of the exile mobilizing structure both in terms of its network and its repertoire.

Comparing Activism in Egypt and England

The move from Egypt to England coincided with changes both in opportunities for activism and the forms it took. The convergence of institutional exclusion and repression in Egypt make the Egyptian polity appear 'closed' to activism, at least relative the stable English polity with its established division of powers, multi-layered representation and availability of political allies for activists. The repertoire of exile is more diverse than the Egyptian repertoire. Activists in England have found a home on campus and have directed much of their energy toward intellectual activities (research, conferences) that straddle the boundary between research and activism. The Egyptian end of the spectrum is fundamentally more radical as it contains riots, the English repertoire being more peaceful.

The attention to the mechanics of exile in the case study however suggests that variation in opportunities and repertoire is more than simply the initial conditions giving way to subsequent conditions. Decertification and brokerage connect activism before and after exile as well as connecting exiled activism to other instances of contentious politics. Both mechanisms appear as historical constants yet exhibit variation at a micro-sociological level entailing different outcomes. Prior to exile decertification was engineered by an authoritarian regime at an institutional level in an attempt to limit and

control political claim-making. After exile the input of an external authority became superfluous as the effects of political censorship became self-reinforcing through rumours and fears. Brokerage meanwhile, though present in inter-SMO cooperation in Egypt, took on an added dimension in England where allies of the movement as diverse as interested observers, trades unions and Members of Parliament acted to integrate exiles into the everyday political claim-making of the host country.

Conclusion: The Mechanics of Exile

When exiles left Egypt for England they left behind a culture of suspicion that expressly prohibited political engagement. Most if not all had been present in the Tahrir revolution, arguably the first iconic moment of democratic history in the 21st century, but arrived in England fatigued, unengaged and often scared. In the permissive political culture of cosmopolitan London their movement flourished, contrary to the implicit aims of the authoritarian regime whose unofficial policy of exile had initiated the process. Yet it did not have to turn out like this. Had exile operated as the military regime of Egypt had intended the movement would have burned out into apathy. As it transpired exile did change activism, but it did not put a stop to it.

Analytically I have suggested that decertification and brokerage explain much of the mobilisation observed. Decertification has historical precedents that can be traced back to the establishment of the mass parties in mid 20th century Egypt. I have argued that after the act of exile has occurred, from the apparent safety of sanctuary abroad, decertification becomes, or is already, internalised to the movement. Historically external authorities were required to discourage activism, yet the act of exile is so traumatic that the need for external factors becomes replaced by rumour and fear in the new context abroad. Brokerage offers, in part, a way of breaking the decertification loop

as political entrepreneurs connect exiles with local allies who are motivated to create and exploit political opportunities.

Herein lie the key findings of this study, reflecting the broader trend in social movement research to progress beyond traditional cause-effect explanations to unpack the mechanisms which bring about puzzling variations. Decertification and brokerage can be said to have general purchase given they have been observed in a wide variety of contexts prior to this research. Their relevance here is that they can be seen to amount to evidence that exile is a process rather than an event. Taken in aggregate they offer one explanation for why exiled activism takes the form it does, yet more profoundly, they demonstrate why exile may hinder yet not spell an end to political participation. That is not to say this explanation is exhaustive; I have not, due to restrictions, touched upon the discourse of exiled activism. Framing processes are a well-established aspect of social movement theory. Nonetheless this explanation may well, subject to further research, be shown to hold for the process of exile generally. The case selection and comparative case study design were intended to support this suggestion. Exile should be considered one of the major processes of contentious politics, along with well established areas of investigation such as mobilisation, revolution and democratisation.

The role of rumour and fear raise interesting questions for existing accounts of why and how mobilisation occurs more generally. Rumours, by definition unsubstantiated, challenge the notion that the decision to participate is based on rational calculation. In fact, the evidence in this paper raises the possibility that fears preventing participation may be in some senses irrational, based as they are on unsubstantiated claims. What matters more to whether mobilisation occurs, and in which forms, are historical processes and causal mechanisms.

Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

References

Abdalla, A. 1985. *The Student Movement and National Politics in Egypt: 1923-1973*. Cairo: AUC Press.

Abdelrahman, M. 2011. 'The Transnational and the local: Egyptian activists and transnational protest networks'. *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*. 38, 3: 407–424.

Ali, Mostaffa. 2011. 'Conversation with an Egyptian Socialist'. *Socialist Worker*. http://socialistworker.org/2011/02/23/interview-with-egyptian-socialist

Baraulina, T., Bommes, M., El-Cherkeh, T., Daume, H., and Vadean, F. 2007. *Egyptian, Afghan, and Serbian diaspora communities in Germany: How do they contribute to their country of origin?* Hamburg Institute of International Economics (HWWI).

Beach, D. and Pedersen, R. 2016. 'Selecting Appropriate Cases when Tracing Causal Mechanisms.' *Sociological Methods & Research*. 47,4: 1 – 35.

Bennett, L. and Segerberg, A. 2012. 'The logic of connective action'. *Information, Communication & Society*. 15, 5.

Binningsbø, H., Loyle, C, Gates, S. and Elster, J. 2012. Armed conflict and post-conflict justice, 1946–2006. *Journal of Peace Research*. 49, 5: 731 – 740.

Blaydes, Lisa. 2008. *Elections and Distributive Politics in Mubarak's Egypt*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Caldwell, Robert G. 1943. 'Exile as an Institution.' *Political Science Quarterly*. 58, 2: 254.

Channel 4 News. 2015. Muslim Brotherhood: 'possible extremists' but no UK ban. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mE3Wo9UaLpA

Committee to Protect Journalists. 2017. Journalists Imprisoned in 2017. https://cpj.org/data/imprisoned/2017/

Cornejo, Marcella. 2008. 'Political Exile and the Construction of Identity: A Life Stories Approach'. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*. 18. 333-348.

Shahidian, H. (2000). 'Sociology and Exile: Banishment and Tensional Loyalties'. *Current Sociology*. 48(2), 71-99.

Edinger, L.J. 1956. *German Exile Politics: The Social Democratic Executive Committee in the Nazi Era*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

el-Hamalawy, Hossam. 'Egypt's Revolution Has Been 10 Years in the Making'. *The Guardian*, December 31, 2015. http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2011/mar/02/egypt-revolution-mubarak-wall-of-fear.

Erlich, Haggai. *Students and University in 20th Century Egyptian Politics*. London: Routledge, 2005.

Falleti, T. G. and pJ. F. Lynch. 'Context and Causal Mechanisms in Political Analysis.' *Comparative Political Studies* 42, no. 9 (April 21, 2009): 1143–1166.

Fine, Gary. 2013 Rumor in collective behavior and social in *The Wiley-Blackwell encyclopaedia of social and political movements*. Snow, David (ed.) Berkeley: Wiley-Blackwell

Fine, G.A., and Turner, P.A. (2001) *Whispers on the Color Line: Rumor and Race in America*. University of California Press, Berkeley

Forsdyke, Sarah. 2005. *Exile, Ostracism and Democracy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Fowler, Floyd. 2009. *Survey Research Methods*. London: Sage.

Gentile, Antonina. 2016. 'World-System Hegemony and How the Mechanism of Certification Skews Intra-European Labor Solidarity'. *Mobilization: An International Quarterly* 21, 1: 105–27.

Ghonim, Wael. 2012. *Revolution 2.0*. New York: Houghton Mifflin.

Global Nonviolent Action Database. 'Kefaya Protests Mubarak's Referendum and Re-Election, Egypt, 2005'. Accessed March 18, 2016. http://nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu/print/content/kefaya-protests-mubaraks-referendum-and-re-election-egypt-2005.

Hashim, Ahmed. 'The Egyptian Military, Part Two: From Mubarak Onward.' *Middle East Policy* 18, 4 (December 2011): 106–128.

Jenkins, J. and Farr, C. 2015. Muslim Brotherhood Review: Main Findings.UK Government: London, Westminster. https://web.archive.org/web/20151224103901/https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/486932/Muslim_Brotherhood_Review_Main_Findings.pdf

Khalil, Ashraf. 2012. *Liberation Square: Inside the Egyptian Revolution and the Rebirth of a Nation*. London: St Martin's Press.

Kunz, E.F. 1973. 'The Refugee in Flight: Kinetic Models and Forms of Displacement'. *International Migration Review*. 7,2: 125-146.

Lewis, David and David Mosse. 2006. *Development brokers and translators: The ethnography of aid and agencies*. Bloomfield, CT: Kumarian Press.

Lim, Merlyna. 'Clicks, Cabs, and Coffee Houses: Social Media and Oppositional Movements in Egypt, 2004-2011'. Jo*urnal of Communication* 62, 2 (February 23, 2012): 231–48.

Lutterbeck, D. 'Arab Uprisings, Armed Forces, and Civil-Military Relations'. *Armed Forces & Society* 39, 1 (April 13, 2012): 28–52.

Mada Masr. 2015, August 14. On Rabea anniversary, rights groups release slew of statements calling for justice. https://www.madamasr.com/en/2015/08/14/news/u/on-rabea-anniversary-rights-groups-release-slew-of-statements-calling-for-justice/

———. 2015, November 5. Protests punctuate Sisi's first day in London. https://www.madamasr.com/en/2015/11/05/news/u/protests-punctuate-sisis-first-day-in-london/

——— 2015. Internal rifts in the Muslim Brotherhood become more public. Mada Masr. http://www.madamasr.com/en/2015/12/15/news/u/internal-rifts-in-the-muslim-brotherhood-become-more-public/.

Marfleet, Philip. 2013. 'Mubarak's Egypt – Nexus of Criminality', *State Crime*, 2, 112–34.

———. 2016a. The political subject in the 'Arab Spring'. *Contemporary Levant*, 1(1), pp.4-11.

———. 2016b. *Egypt: Contested Revolution*. 1st ed. London: Pluto Press.

Middle East Solidarity Spring 2016

Naguib, Sameh. 2011. 'The Islamists and the Egyptian Revolution'. *Socialist Review*. (359) http://socialistreview.org.uk/359/islamists-and-egyptian-revolution

Oweidat, N., Benard, C., Stahl, D., Kildani, W., O'Connell, E., & Grant, A. K. 2008. The Kefaya movement: a case study of a grassroots reform initiative. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation. Retrieved from http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs /2008/RAND_MG778.sum.pdf.

Polletta, F. 2006. *It Was Like a Fever: Storytelling in Protest and Politics*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

Rich, David. 2010. The Very Model of a British Muslim Brotherhood. In Rubin B. (ed) *The Muslim Brotherhood. The Middle East in Focus*. Palgrave Macmillan, New York.

Roemer, Stephanie. 2008. *The Tibetan Government in Exile: Politics at Large*. New York: Routledge.

Yossi Shain and Aharon Barth (2003) 'Diasporas and International Relations Theory' *International Organization*, Vol. 57, No. 3 pp. 449-479

Shain, Yossi. 1989. *The Frontier of Loyalty: Political Exiles in the Age of the Nation-State*. Middletown: Wesleyan University Press.

——— 2009. 'Who is a Political Exile? Defining a Field of Study for Political Science'. *International Migration*. 387-400.

Shaw, Christine. 2000. *The Politics of Exile in Renaissance Italy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Shibutani, T. 1966. *Improvised News: The Sociological Study of Rumor*. Bobbs-Merrill, Indianapolis.

Staggenborg, Suzanne 2002. 'Semi-structured interviewing in social movement research' in Klandermans, Bert and Staggenborg Suzanne (eds) *Methods of social movement research*. Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press.

Sznajder, Mario. and Roniger, Luis. 2007. Exile communities and their differential institutional dynamics: a comparative analysis of the Chilean and Uruguayan political diasporas.' *Revista de ciencia politica* 27(1) 43-66.

———. 2009. *The Politics of Exile in Latin America*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Tarrow, Sidney and Tilly, Charles. 2012. *Contentious Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Torres, Maria. 1999. *In the Land of Mirrors: Cuban Exile Politics in the United States*. Michigan: University of Michigan Press.

Underhill, H. (2016). Learning in revolution: perspectives on democracy from Egypt's UK-based diaspora activists. *Contemporary Levant*, 1(1), pp.25-37.

Vatikiotis. P.J. 1978. *Nasser and his Generation*. London: Croom Helm.

Vatikiotis. P.J. 1980. *The History of Egypt*. California: Weidenfeld and Nicolson

Whine, Michael. 2005 The Advance of the Muslim Brotherhood in the UK in Hillel Fradkin, Husain Haqqani & Eric Brown, eds., "Current trends in Islamist Ideology", Volume 2, Center on Islam, Democracy, and the Future of the Muslim World, Washington DC: The Hudson Institute, 2005, pp. 30-39.

Wickham, Carrie Rosefsky. 2008. *The Muslim Brotherhood: Evolution of an Islamist Movement*. United States: Princeton University Press.

Rumour and Decertification in Exile Politics: Evidence from the Egyptian Case

Dr David McKeever

Ulster University, Belfast, United Kingdom

d.mckeever@ulster.ac.uk

David McKeever, a graduate of Ulster University, is a political scientist specialising in social movement research.